

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT  
South 4 Group Fire - Removal Polrep  
Initial Removal Polrep



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
Region VI

**Subject:** POLREP #1  
Initial  
South 4 Group Fire  
  
Port Neches, TX  
Latitude: 29.9753125 Longitude: -93.9449089

**To:** Anthony Buck, TCEQ  
Reggie Cheatham, EPA HQ  
Craig Carroll, EPA Region 6

**From:** Adam Adams, OSC

**Date:** 11/27/2019

**Reporting Period:** Initial 24 hours - 11/27/2019

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Site Number:	A6TK	Contract Number:	
D.O. Number:		Action Memo Date:	
Response Authority:	CERCLA	Response Type:	Emergency
Response Lead:	PRP	Incident Category:	
NPL Status:	Non NPL	Operable Unit:	
Mobilization Date:	11/27/2019	Start Date:	11/27/2019
Demob Date:		Completion Date:	
CERCLIS ID:		RCRIS ID:	
ERNS No.:		State Notification:	
FPN#:		Reimbursable Account #:	

1.1.1 Incident Category

Emergency Response; CERCLA; Unified Command established.

1.1.2 Site Description

The Site is an approximate 100 acre, C4 hydrocarbon processing plant that makes intermediary products for synthetic rubber. The Site contains multiple storage tanks and related processing equipment. Treated waste water is discharged from the joint waste water treatment plant (JWWWT) direct to the Neches River.

1.1.2.1 Location

2102 Spur 136, Port Neches, Jefferson County, Texas

29.978056, -93.939167

1.1.2.2 Description of Threat

Explosions and fire are threats along with emissions and releases of C4 hydrocarbons and various butadienes.

1.1.3 Preliminary Removal Assessment/Removal Site Inspection Results

Due to the instability of the Site, active fires and explosions, and limited ability to conduct a detailed assessment of the status of the tanks, towers, and contents in each after the incident began, preliminary assessment efforts have been minimal.

2. Current Activities

2.1 Operations Section

2.1.1 Narrative

At 0100 hours on 27 November 2019, an explosion at the TPC Port Neches facility in Port Neches, TX, started a fire that spread through the South 4 Group processing unit. The blast from the explosion caused damage and shattered windows up to a mile away. The City of Groves enacted a shelter in place and instituted a 1/2 mile evacuation zone around the Site. The fire continued to burn throughout the 27th and a second explosion occurred in the early afternoon.

The cause of the initial explosion is unknown.

2.1.2 Response Actions to Date

An evacuation radius of 0.5 mile was established shortly after the initial explosion and a shelter in place was issued for the City of Groves and south of the facility all the way to the Hwy 73 bridge. At approximately 0200 hours EOC was established at the Huntsman Administrative Building at 2701 TX-136, Port Neches TX. START was activated at 0245 hours and arrived on Site at 0530 hours. EPA OSC was activated to respond and was on site at approximately 0900. ASPECT was deployed and on site by 0800 hours to conduct flyovers of the incident and downwind community. A no fly zone of 3 miles wide and 3000'

high was established surrounding the incident.

Water Safety Zone was established by USCG from Neches River Light 20 (Fina Lower Anchorage) to Neches River Light 29 (Phillips 66). USCG are currently allowing barge traffic monitored one at a time. In addition to ASPECT air monitoring, there are currently 3 EPA air monitoring teams collecting data downwind and in the community. There have been no detections of VOCs by the EPA air monitoring teams at this time.

On behalf of TPC, CTEH has conducted perimeter air monitoring around the Site and has detected a maximum concentration of 1.2 ppm VOCs. At 1348 a second explosion occurred at the Site.

In addition, TCEQ is conducting air monitoring in the community with four teams. An air monitoring strike team was stood up, which is comprised of air monitoring by EPA, TCEQ, and TPC, which conducts air monitoring at previous locations where detections were measured to determine sustained measurements or instantaneous.

### 2.1.3 Enforcement Activities, Identity of Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs)

The PRP for this incident, at this time, is Texas Petrochemical (TPC) located in Port Neches, Texas.

### 2.1.4 Progress Metrics

No progress metrics have been provided at this time by TPC.

<i>Waste Stream</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Manifest #</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Disposal</i>

## 2.2 Planning Section

### 2.2.1 Anticipated Activities

Response efforts will be ramped up or down as dictated by the incident. TPC has been directed to contain and recover liquid spillage and fire water. Air monitoring efforts will continue in the impacted area and downwind community. Fire suppression will be continued. Unified Command will continue to share information with the stakeholders and community. Unified Command will continue to communicate any air monitoring measurements in the community above Unified Command approved action levels to local authorities for actions to be determined and communicated to the community. Actions may include shelter in place or evacuation.

#### 2.2.1.1 Planned Response Activities

Continue air monitoring throughout the impacted area and downwind community.  
Contain and recover released liquids.  
Continue fire suppression and vapor suppression, if needed.

#### 2.2.1.2 Next Steps

Operations are 24 hours/day and will continue with a 24 hour operational period from 0600 to 0600 for planning purposes.

#### 2.2.2 Notes

Air monitoring action levels were established for Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC's) at 5 parts per million (ppm) and 1,3-butadiene at 0.5 ppm.

## 2.3 Logistics Section

NA

## 2.4 Finance Section

NA

## 2.5 Other Command Staff

NA

## 3. Participating Entities

### 3.1 Unified Command

Unified Command was established on 11/27/2019 with TPC, EPA, TCEQ, and County and Local authorities.

### 3.2 Cooperating Agencies

Additional agencies that have responded or are responding include OSHA, USCG, NOAA, Jefferson County Judge's Office, Port Neches Police Department, DPS, Civil Support Team, Texas Department of Emergency Management, Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, Port Neches Fire Department, Nederland Fire Department, Port Arthur Fire Department, Groves Fire Department, Silsvee Volunteer Fire Department, Port Arthur Police Department, Golden Triangle Incident Management Team, Southeast Texas Regional Advisory Council, Groves Police Department, Nederland Police Department, Port Neches Police Department, Jefferson County Office of Emergency Management, Acadian Emergency Management Services, Texas General Land Office, Texas Highway Patrol, Lower Neches Valley Authority, and Drainage District #7. This list is not all inclusive.

## 4. Personnel On Site

Representatives from participating agencies are present at their discretion.

## 5. Definition of Terms

No information available at this time.

**6. Additional sources of information**

**6.1 Internet location of additional information/report**

Additional information can be obtained at [www.response.epa.gov/south4groupfire](http://www.response.epa.gov/south4groupfire).

**6.2 Reporting Schedule**

Additional POLREP's will be provided as needed. A Final POLREP will be submitted upon completion.

**7. Situational Reference Materials**

No information available at this time.